

## Research Article

# Empowering of the teacher's identity crisis for supporting quality young gifted education

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### Abstract

To support good education for young gifted children, needed teachers who have a strong character, in terms of principles, professionalism, and identity. If the teachers who teach these gifted children have weak characters, either because of internal or external factors, then the resulting education is not optimal. One of the important factors that must be considered is the teacher's identity. The topic of empowering teacher's identity in young gifted education has less attention from researchers even though this theme is essential to study. This study aims to determine the problems faced by private school teachers in young gifted education, how it impacts their professional identity crisis, and what strategies proposed to strengthen their identity crisis? Research conducted a qualitative approach. Data were collected through open questionnaires distributed to 45 teachers. After data analyzed qualitatively, the researcher goes to choosing 16 teachers involved in the Focus Discussion Group (FGD) for deepening the theme and data validity. This study revealed that teachers of private elementary schools face many problems, which in turn losing their teacher's professional identity. Three types of teachers concerning identity crisis were founded. Most of them vulnerable to change their teacher's professional identity. Strategies to empower their identity crisis as professional teachers proposed.

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## Introduction

The study of teacher professional identity has received much attention from researchers lately. The results of Izadinia's review of 29 studies showed variations in background, theory, methods, and outcomes (Izadinia, 2013). Cattley (2007) examined eight teachers to find out what elements were considered the most influential in the development of their professional identity. He found that teachers shape their professional identity through reflective methods. Wenger (1998) explained that teachers develop professional identity through learning communities. When a person becomes a member of a particular community, he will learn all about teacher's properties from interaction and collaboration with community members. A new teacher, when entering the professional community, will recognize, adapt, and collaborate with his colleagues to learn how to strengthen his professional identity (Franzak, 2002). Several existing studies are still differencing from opinions among researchers on how the teacher's professional identity formed and how efforts to strengthen it carried out. There are also a few studies that look at the teacher identity crisis and the factors that influence it.

Being a teacher is a noble identity. Therefore it has been a lot of people who are proud to be teachers or work as teachers. In some developing countries, such as Indonesia, teachers are highly valued for their existence (Rahadian, 2018). They are respected by the community and place teachers in the middle to high social strata, depending on their professional level (Saat, 2014). Because of this, universities that open majors in education are always in high demand by students who have just graduated from high school. Besides, when the government opens job vacancies

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as teachers at all levels of public education, it is always in demand by thousands of people who register themselves as public teacher candidates (Ardyani, 2014).

Many factors encourage someone interested in becoming a teacher. Fajardo Castaneda (2011) explains three factors encourage students interested in becoming teachers; family factors, teacher factors, and foreign language factors. Bergmark et al. (2018) found four reasons someone was interested in becoming a teacher; (re)creating the caring school, creating a desirable (professional) life, fostering the upright human being, and forming valuable knowledge. Gomes et al. (2017) found four causes for someone interested in becoming a teacher; emotional gratification, teaching-learning, demand for professionals, and valuation of the profession. Sinclair (2008) also revealed two factors driving to be a teacher; altruistic and intrinsic factors. In terms of classical reasons, Lortie (2002) suggests five factors driving a person to become a teacher; (1) interpersonal relations (2) teaching as priesthood (3) continuity (4) material benefits, and (5) compatibility of time. Pop and Turner (2009) explain some motivational typologies of being a teacher: identity, belief, opportunities, and emotion.

But lately, along with the times and technology development, the teaching profession has become less desirable (Hamid, 2017). Many factors that caused a decrease in the interest of the younger generation to become teachers. Gomes et al. (2017) described seven factors that caused decreasing the interest in becoming a teacher lately; poor reward, social devaluation, teachers stress and health, violation in school, workload, and the absence of a parent in the formation of their springs. Valle (2006) described four factors why teacher's careers are less desirable by the community: (1) the future of teacher profession uncertainty; (2) poor salaries; (3) limited possibilities for personal ascension; (4) uncomfortable working condition.

The most dominant factor that caused children to be no longer interested in the teaching profession is the salary factor (Barbosa, 2014). Children today in choosing a business, give priority to financial factors or salary than other factors related to identity, belief, and emotion. Professionals whose jobs are light and well-paid are more attractive than those of teachers who considered to have heavy work with low salaries (Tartuce et al. 2010). Therefore, becoming a teacher in primary school is difficult when viewed from those factors. Authorities must pay more attention to them to be able to survive in carrying out their profession and do their jobs well, especially private elementary school teachers who carry the most significant burden with a smaller salary.

There is no single definition that can explain the meaning of identity entirely. Some existing definitions describe the identity differently depending on which point they define the word identity. Cambridge Dictionary defines identity as the qualities of a person or group that makes them different from others or the reputation and characteristics of a person or organization that makes the public think of them in a particular way (Dictionary, 2008). While Abbott (2000) defines identity as the condition of being a particular person or thing, or the set of characteristics by which a person or thing is definitively recognizable or known. There are many other similar definitions raised by experts in the meaning of identity. However, of the many definitions, it can be concluded that identity is a set of qualities of characters of people or groups of people that makes them different from others, and people recognize them because of those characteristics.

Identity is personal and social. Personal identity means a character that is realized by someone through a long process of experience and understanding of what experience so that self-awareness formed about who he is. In contrast, social identity is the identity given by the community because of his role in society so that others give him a character following that role (Bergmark et al. 2018b, pp. 23–24).

By this definition, teachers' identity means a set of characteristics possessed by someone because of the experience they have and realizes that he is a teacher. Socially, teacher identity is the identity given by the community to someone because of his role as a teacher in the community. Based on the above definition, the process of forming teacher identity is rational, negotiated, enacted, transforming, constructed, and transitional (Miller, 2008). Teacher identity is not a fixed property (Beijaard, 2019) that is directly owned by someone, but a process that evolves and changes according to experience through classroom practice, professional consolidation and experiential knowledge (Fajardo Castaneda, 2011). Because the teacher's identity is rational and negotiated, it can weaken and strengthen depending on the factors that surround a person in undergoing his job as a teacher. This process is influenced by social, cultural, and socio-political contexts that develop where a teacher works and lives (Tsui, 2003).

The identity is a process formed through a long process, both personal and social (Bergmark et al. 2018a). If the elements support, the formation of identity will strengthen and vice versa if the supporting elements weaken (Wenger, 1998). Emotions affect the weakening or strengthening of identity (Day & Leitch, 2001). Because identity

is a process of social transactions, a teacher identity crisis is very likely to occur in a teacher (Bolívar et al. 2014; Mcdougall, 2010). The factors of social, cultural, technological, economic, and information change lead to increased diversity in society, especially in developing countries. These factors affect changes in a person's identity until that identity maintained or changed (Gee, 2001).

### Young Gifted Education and Teachers' Identity Crisis

The teacher is an essential factor in determining educational goals and objectives (Hill et al. 2019). They help students in shaping character, determining life values, moral values, and social values (Batu, 2010). Teachers also play a role in selecting learning experiences, determining learning methods or strategies, and being behavioral models for young gifted students (McKinney et al. 2008). They need teachers who understand their characteristics and direct them on the right path. Therefore not all teachers can teach talented students. Gifted children have tremendous potential to be either positive or negative (Johnsen, 2004). The handling determines this they get during their growth and development, both in their families, schools, and the communities where they live. They are superior seeds that are ready to grow and develop into extraordinary people, depending on the environment in which they are grown and how they are treated. If they are mistreated and not under their characteristics, they may react with anger, hatred, or resentment towards the teacher or school (Honeck, 2012).

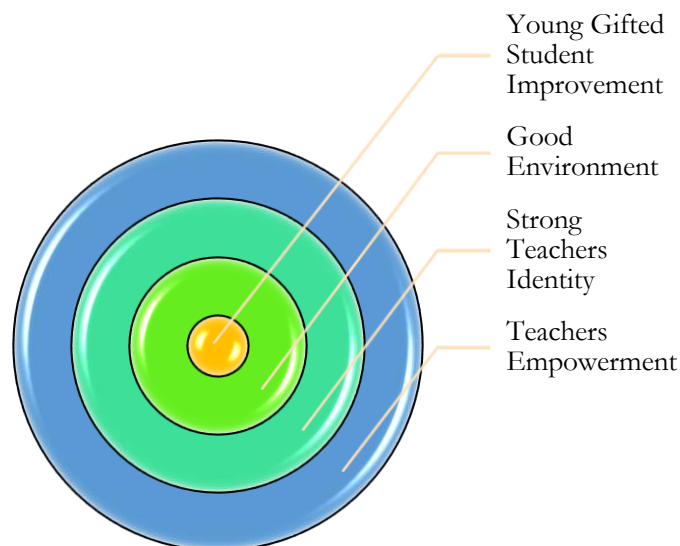
Gifted children need the right environment to grow and develop. They need to strengthen their achievements to be confident in their creative work. An unresponsive environment discourages creative enthusiasm, and harsh criticism can kill a sensitive child's creative efforts. On the other hand, excessive and non-selective Praise is less meaningful. Creative individuals value appropriate judgment. Praise for quality work and positive, constructive criticism support the growth of creative abilities and self-confidence (Geake & Gross, 2008).

Not all teachers can be guides for gifted children. Only teachers with unique abilities can become mentors for talented children. Among the characteristics of qualified child teachers are being democratic, friendly and paying attention per person, patient, broad interest, pleasant appearance, fair, impartial, have a sense of humor, behave consistently, pay attention to children's problems, flexible, use of awards and exams, and exceptional proficiency in teaching a specific subject (Ford & Trotman, 2001).

Maker (1982) divides gifted child teachers' characteristics into philosophical, professional, and personal. This philosophical characteristic is important because the way teachers view education impacts their approach to teaching. For example, teachers who believe that gifted education in special class programs or special schools create an elite group will approach such programs with negative feelings and a lack of enthusiasm for talented programs. If teachers see giftedness as high intellectual potential, creativity, and high achievement, they will approach gifted children in terms of strengths and focus on the subject matter. In contrast to teachers who view giftedness as covering individual strengths and weaknesses, their teaching situations are centered on individually gifted students.

Teacher professional characteristics can be developed through in-service training, such as using group dynamics skills, techniques, and advanced strategies in certain subjects, providing inquiry training, and understanding computer science (Jahangir et al. 2012). The characteristics of teachers who successfully work with gifted children are teachers who can understand and accept themselves, have a sensitivity to others, have intellectual interests above average, and are responsible for their behavior and its consequences. Other characteristics of gifted child teachers are empathy, tolerance, originality, enthusiasm, and self-actualization (Ford & Trotman, 2001). Other findings suggest that teachers who are judged to be highly effective in working with gifted students prefer abstract themes and concepts, are open and flexible, and value logical analysis and objectivity. Results suggest that teacher personality and cognitive style may play a role in his or her effectiveness in teaching gifted students (Mills, 2003).

Success in developing gifted children depends on teachers' necessary skills, strong personalities, and clear identities. Teachers' deficient professional identity leads to low performance and quality. Therefore, schools and governments have to strengthen gifted children's teachers' identities to make them able to carry out their duties properly. Strengthening programs must be carried out through various programs to make teachers feel proud of their identity and carry out their full responsibility assignments.



**Figure 1.**

*Young Gifted Student Improvement and Teacher's Identity Empowerment*

### Research Problem

The teacher professional identity crisis in this study is to identify what social factors can influence the erosion of the teacher's professional identity when dealing with the realities of life. Based on the concept of social construction above, the identity formed through individual and social processes, it is assumed that the teacher's identity is also formed through the process (Bergmark et al. 2018a). Therefore, when the supporting elements for the formation of a teacher's professional identity increase, the identity will survive and strengthen. Conversely, if there are other factors that interfere with the existence of a teacher's professionalism identity, there will be an identity crisis in them and they will experience the diversity of identities (Gee, 2001) then, in turn, it will make them not concerned in carrying out their profession as a teacher.

Empowerment needed to maintain and to strengthen teachers' professional identity (Herbert, 2012). How is the reinforcement done? Some studies explain, reinforcement is done through critical reflection (Msila, 2013), technology (Aust & Padmanabhan, 1994), professional learning (Dempster et al. 2017; Townsend & Bayetto, 2020), action research, collaboration, and facilitation (Lambirth et al. 2019). However, most of these studies look at it from the perspective of leadership or management alone. Rare research that efforts to strengthen the professional identity of teachers from the teacher's perspective itself, especially from the private teacher's community.

Teachers of young gifted student in schools, need to have strong characters to carry out their profession as teachers without being bothered by feelings of hesitation in doing their duties. If this steadiness decreases, teachers feeling as a teacher so that they are not serious in carrying out their duties and results in the low quality of education provided. Therefore, the teacher's identity must be cared for and maintained by the leaders of educational institutions to maintain the quality of education, especially for gifted children.

This research's primary purpose is to explore the problems faced by young gifted student teachers and their impact on their identity crisis as professional teachers. To make it easy on developing the idea, the issue of research divided into three research question below:

- What are the factors causing the identity crisis for young gift education teachers?
- What is their typology when viewed from an identity crisis?
- What strategies need to be taken by policymakers to strengthen these teachers' identity crises as professional teachers?

## Method

### Research Model

This research uses a qualitative approach. The focus of qualitative research is on understanding and interpreting other people's social world by accessing their lived experiences (Mason, 2002). The study investigated the perception of private elementary school teachers on the problems they face in experiencing their profession and how it impacts on their professional identity. It explored the ways teachers in elementary school carry out their duties as teachers and their satisfaction in carrying out that task. In the next stage, it explained whether their experiences, feelings, and

perceptions of their work affect their professional identity as teachers. It also explored teachers' beliefs about the possibility of changing identities when they couldn't solve the problem related to their teacher's profession.

### Participants

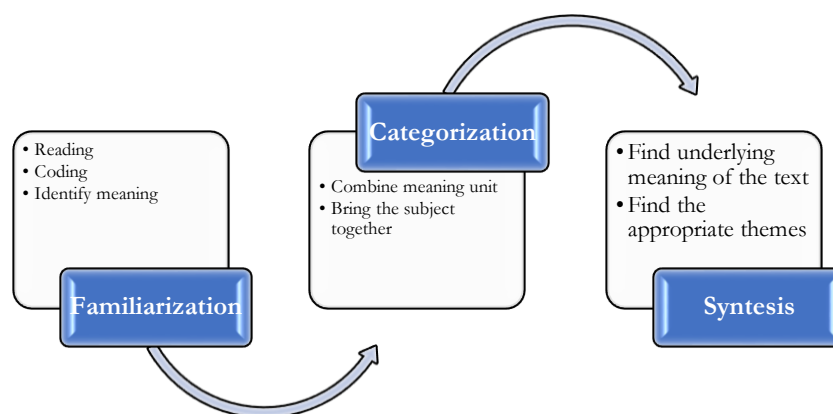
Participants in this study were teachers who were continuing their master's studies at the UIN Maliki Malang Indonesia. They come from various provinces and cities in Indonesia. However, because not all participants were private school teachers, the researchers selected only those who taught in private primary schools. From our selection results, the researchers got 45 teachers from private elementary schools and then determined as participants in this study. Of the 45 teachers, 18 are females and 27 are male teachers. Their working period ranges from 2 to 15 years, but most of them have spent more than five years in private primary school.

### Data Collection and Validity

Data were collected through interviews and open questionnaires. The first step researcher distributes the open questions to all participants with begun with asking them the demographic questions such as school name, teacher's status, tenure, and age. In addition, a number of questions related to the focus of the study were asked in the form of open questions, so that participants could answer them freely. From the results of the open questionnaire, the answers were analyzed to find the important points to be followed up at a more detailed stage. To confirm the data, the researcher formed a Focus Discussion Group (FGD) (Kitzinger, 1995) by selecting 16 teachers as their representatives to be used as key informants as well as to confirm the validity of the data. In the FGD, the researchers began by conducting interviews with them, each person taking approximately 10-15 minutes related to the problems of teacher identity and the possibility to make changes to the teacher's identity if there is a better offer. The interview was voice recorded and the results were transcribed. After the interview process is completed, the researcher and the participants continue with a discussion related to the research findings.

### Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the answers to the questionnaires and transcripts of the interview read repeatedly to understand and find the meaning behind the statement. The coding process carried out to mark important points deduced from the statement (Gibbs, 2007). Some codes found are related to each other to find the categories and cultural themes (Huberman & Miles, 2002). The research process in the study shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 2.**

*Process of Data Analysis*

In general, the process of data analysis in this study was carried out in three stages. First, familiarization. At this stage, the researcher seeks to familiarize his selves with the data through multiple readings of the transcripts. From the reading, if the researcher finds important points that interest the researcher, he will code it which in turn will be interpreted according to the context. Second, analyzed into categories and themes. Thematic analysis is an iterative process involving several stages of categorizing and filtering the data in order to identify and extract dominant themes. In this step, researcher tried to relate one code and others to find out the relation between one and other meaning. Researcher also compared responses with other responses in the transcripts and bring the subject together when he sees the same meaning unit, comparing responses with emergent categories or themes, and then comparing categories or themes with other themes. The third, synthesis. In this step researchers investigated each of the themes to consider whether any could be combined with others of a similar nature (Creswel, 2009).

**Results**

After going through the data analysis process, the researcher found important points related to the research objectives. In general, the findings of this study and data validity can be illustrated in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.**  
*General Finding and Data Validity*

Theme	Participants	Categories	Triangulation/FGD
<b>Problems eroding teachers identity</b>	P1,P2,P6,P7,P9,P12,P23,P16,P18,P20,P21,P22,P25,P26,P28,P31,P33,P35,P3,P41,P45	Low salary	MDM, WKS, PBD, ASD, MPA, PAD, WAB, PJS, KPL, WMB
	P2,P3,P5,P8,P9,P14,P18,P22,P26,P29,P32,P37,P42,P45	School high standard	KMS, WMD, PAD, WMB, SDL, PJS, KPD
	P1,P3,P4,P5,P6,P8,P11,P13,P17,P19,P20,P25,P29,P33,P34,P38,P41,P42,P44	Changing of policy	PBD, SDL, PAD, MPA, KMS, PAC, KPL
	P2,P5,P6,P7,P9,P11,P18,P19,P23,P25,P30,P32,P34,P38,P40,41,P42,P45	Huge of jobs	KMS, MDM, WKS, PJS, MNM, WAB
	P2,P3,P5,P6,P7,P9,P11,P15,P18,P21,P22,P24,P27,P29,P31,P36,P37,P40,P41,P43,P44	Time management: administration, academic, and family	PDB, PAD, KPL, MPA, PAC, STW
<b>Converting to other provision</b>	P1,P2,P4,P6,P8,P9,P12,P13,P16,P18,P21,P22,P26,P28,P31,P33,P35,P36,P41,43,P45	Yes, I will take other provision and leave teaching provision	WKS,MDM,PAD,ASD,PJ S,KMS,WMB,KPL
	P3,P5,P10,P15,P17,P20,P23,P29,P34,P38,P40,P44	Yes, I will take other provision but not to leave teaching	PDB,PAC,MNM,WAB
	P7,P11,P14,P19,P24,P25,P27,P30,P32,P37,P39,P42	No, I will not leave teaching whatever	MPA,STW,MPA
<b>Steps of empowerment</b>	P1,P3,P6,P8,P9,P11,P23,P16,P18,P19,P21,P22,P25,P26,P28,P31,P33,P34,P36,P41,P45	Improving teachers welfare	WKS, ASD, MPA, PAD, WAB, PJS, KPL, WMB, PBD
	P1,P2,P3,P4,P7,P9,P13,P18,P21,P25,P29,P33,P37,P42,P44	Supporting teachers to improve	WAB,KMS, WMD, PAD, WMB, SDL, PJS, KPD
	P2,P3,P4,P5,P7,P8,P11,P13,P16,P19,P20,P25,P29,P32,P34,P38,P41,P42,P45	Facilitating teachers need	PAD, PBD, SDL, MPA, WKS,MDM, KPD
	P1,P4,P5,P6,P7,P9,P11,P18,P19,P23,P23,P30,P32,P34,P36,P40,41,P42,P44	Peer teaching	PAD,ASD,PJS,KMS,WMB ,KPL,KMS, PAC

**Theme 1: Factors Affecting Teachers Identity Crisis**

When teachers asked about the problems they face while becoming teachers in private primary schools, they provide varied responses. However, after an in-depth analysis, their answers can generally be summed up into the table below:

**Table 2.**  
*The Content Analysis of Gifted Students' Teacher Views on Factors Affecting Teachers' Identity Crisis*

<b>Theme 1: Factors affecting teachers identity crisis</b>	
Codes	f
Salary	9
High-grade standard	7
Policy changing	7
Huge jobs	6
Time management	6

The biggest problem faced by private elementary school teachers in carrying out their duties as teachers is low salary. Most of them get salaries below the regional minimum wage. Some of them even get a salary half of the

regional minimum wage because the education institutions where they work unable to provide the standard salary set by the government.

*We love teaching and are proud to be teachers. Nevertheless, there is a little problem that sometimes disturbs our enthusiasm for wor. Many of us earn less than the regional minimum wage. Although there is a government certification program, this program has not yet reached all teachers in schools (p.5)*

Although the schools have received operational assistance from the government, the assistances are not sufficient to pay their teachers a standard salary. The government certification program is quite helpful, but the program has not touched all private teachers in private educational institutions. Even according to them, the number of participants in the certification program tends to decrease in number from year to year and it becomes increasingly difficult to follow. This problem related to the high standard of subject assessment. For private school teachers, setting high assessment standards is a crucial problem, because student input into private institutions is mostly low and comes from underprivileged families.

*Indeed the school gets operational funding from the educational office, but it is only sufficient for functional education, and the school cannot spend it entirely to pay teachers. (P.6)*

To achieve the minimum grade target set by the school or government, teachers must try their best. However, due to the low quality of inputs and the lack of available supporting facilities and low parental support, the task of these private teachers is getting heavier. Private elementary school teachers complain that education policies change from year to year. When the leader change, the policies change which is sometimes not in line with the previous policies.

*Another issue important to mention is changing government policies. When the Minister of Education changes, the system will change. They are easy to say and make orders. At the same time, those of us at the bottom feel confused about translating their new policies (P.2)*

Whereas a new government policy is effective after five years, starting from the process of design, socialization, testing, training, and implementation. Private schools always get the last turn in the process of socialization until implementation. When they have been given training and are ready to implement the policy, suddenly the new government replaces the policy again with a new policy that is different.

Private elementary school teachers also complained about the many teacher assignments, ranging from teaching assignments, task correction, guidance, and making reports. The tasks were not completed in school. Many of them have to bring home the work to be completed at home. If not done, their work will increasingly accumulate and eventually not finished. This situation often makes teachers stressed and exhausted, both physically and psychologically.

*Another issue that I think is important to explain is the changing government policies. If the Minister of Education changes then change the policy. They are easy to say and make orders. While those of us at the bottom feel confused translating their new policies. This is hard for us. (P.21)*

*Many jobs bring us to finish our work at home because we don't have enough time to do it at school. We have to teach in the class, correct student work, prepare SAP, and make daily, weekly, and monthly reports (P.12).*

The school working hours set by the school or government are clear, starting at 7.00-3.00 PM. However, due to the large number of tasks, they have difficulty arranging time between administrative, teaching and family matters. Teachers are not only required to complete educational tasks, but they are also required to complete administrative tasks daily, weekly, monthly, and so on. For a married teacher, the tasks are getting heavier because sometimes they have to complete tasks at home mixed with family tasks.

## **Theme 2: Typology of Teacher Relating to Identity Crisis**

The second problem that the researcher asked the private elementary school teachers was about the possibility of professional teacher's identity change. Asked about this problem, their responses varied. Most of them answered possible, some others answered impossible, and the rest answered conditional. In general, according to our analysis, they can be classified into three groups; idealist, partialist, and opportunist.

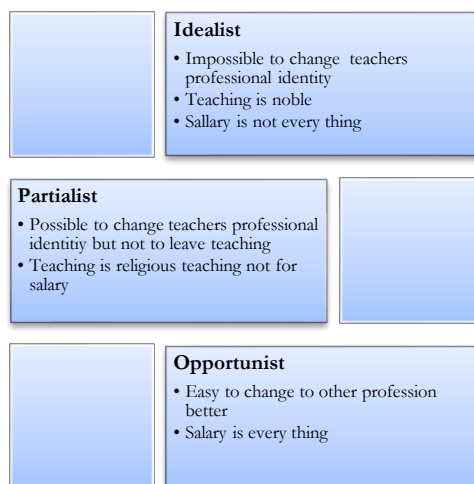
Some quotations of teacher's opinions about teachers' possibility to identity change as follows;

*Teaching is a good job, and we need a decent salary. If there is a job with a better salary, I would better move to work there (P.7). I choose to teach because I don't have another choice to do (P.3). The salary is essential; nonetheless, we*

*will keep teaching whatever and even if we don't receive any wages, because teaching is a noble work and worship. (P.14). If told to leave teaching, it is hard for me. But if asked whether it is possible to leave the teaching profession to other professions, maybe, but I will keep teaching if there is time, even if not paid (P.23). Some of my friends finally resigned from teaching and chose another job that he thought was better. But life is a choice. He has the right to make his own choices (P.25).*

For opportunist teachers, they are ready to change the teaching profession to others if the new profession gave a higher salary than their previous job. They feel the salary from teaching is not enough to meet the needs of their lives and family. Therefore, if there is a better opportunity outside the teaching profession, they are ready to pick it up to change their destiny for the better.

While idealist teachers, they would not leave the teaching profession whatever. For them, teaching is not an option but an obligation. Salary is not the only goal in choosing a profession as a teacher. They chose the teaching profession because teaching is worship. While others argued that they will not leave teaching because they enjoyed it, teaching is their passion and pleasure that can't be replaced by other jobs. About the lack of salaries they do not care, because they can find other ways outside of teaching.

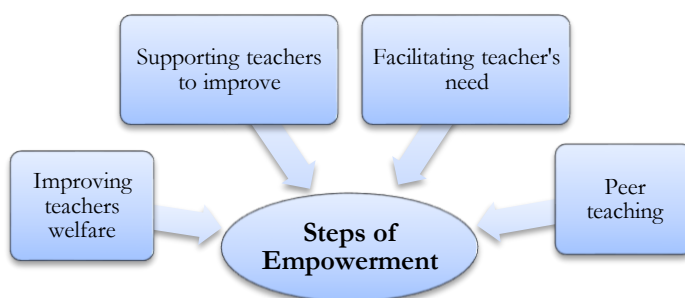


**Figure 3.**  
*Teachers Possibility to Identity Change*

For partialist teachers, they would change the teaching profession to another one with the condition that they were still allowed to teach. Really they cannot leave teaching at school, but because of economic demands, they are willing to give up their teacher's profession to get a higher salary. Even so, they will still look for free time to teach when they have the opportunity to do.

**Theme 3. Steps of Empowerment: Teachers Voices**

The researcher also asked participants what suggestions they recommended for the authorities to solve their problems relate to their profession. Answering this question, varied answers emerge from the participants which the researcher concluded them into four themes: (1) Improving teacher's welfare, (2) Supporting teachers to improve, (3) Facilitating teacher's need, and (4) Peer teaching.



**Figure 4.**  
*Steps of Professional Teachers Identity Empowerment*

Some quotations of teacher’s opinions about teachers’ identity empowerment as follows;



*The government should improve teachers' welfare to bring them to better work environments (P.23). A good salary will motivate us to improve our performance. The authorities should note this point in their primary program (p.14). We hope the government cares more by improving teachers' quality in primary schools (p.8). Scholarships in the Master Program are necessary for teachers because new knowledge will improve their performance (p.16). We need to go forward, but our facilities are limited. School and government should support our facilities for our progress. (P.2) Senior and junior teachers sometimes have a communication gap. The peer teaching program is essential for helping junior teachers overcoming their problems (P.24).*

Private teachers in primary schools emphasize teacher welfare in the first place because it is the main problem faced by most private teachers in primary schools in Indonesia. The low salary they get from school every month makes them not excited about carrying out their profession as elementary school teachers.

They hoped the government would pay attention to this problem so that they would be more enthusiastic about working. They also hope the government supports teachers to improve. During this time the government has been supporting the development of teachers, but it is still limited to guidance through supervision by a relatively small number of regional supervisors. Each supervisor is in charge of all subject teachers in one sub-district area, sometimes with more than 50 teachers that make supervision becomes less effective. They proposed that support should be more on improving the quality of human resources through training, empowerment, and improvement of higher education levels.

Private teachers in primary schools suggest that the government and the authorities provide adequate facilities for the interests of teachers, such as teaching facilities, supporting facilities such as the internet, computers, and books that support teaching assignments. If the facilities are fulfilled they can carry out their duties better.

Although not all private primary schools are in poor condition, most have to struggle to meet the needs of their facilities. They must be clever in managing the income, both in the form of assistance from the government and from student payments every month.

Most teachers in private primary schools are new teachers who have approximately 3 to 5 years of experience. The problem they faced when they became teachers in the first year was the lack of guidance from seniors. In some elementary private schools, communication between senior and junior teachers are not well established, so when the junior teachers face a problem in carrying out their profession, they experience difficulties. If the institution establishes peer teaching supported by government policy, the difficulties faced by junior teachers will be overcome.

## Discussion and Conclusion

From the finding above it can be seen that elementary school teachers are vulnerable to the change of professional identity to other more promising professions. The problems they face in carrying out their professions as teachers, make them vulnerable to be influenced by other factors that are more promising, especially the salary factor. Data show that 60% of participants would switch professions if there were other professions more profitable. This justifies the theory of identity formation which says that identity is formed because of personal and social impulse (Bergmark et al. 2018a), which is transactional (Miller, 2008) and is influenced by socio-cultural pervading (Tsui, 2003). Therefore the teacher's professional identity is also vulnerable to being eroded by the circumstances surrounding a teacher.

The finding also shows that there are three types of teachers in responding to changes in identity, namely idealist, partialist and opportunist. The idealist type teacher is the teacher who chooses the teaching profession because of personal impulses that arise from within himself, is more resistant to facing the temptations of identity change, because the teaching profession becomes his choice based on pleasure (hobbies) and love of teaching. Therefore a low salary is not a problem for him, because teaching is devotion, and it is unethical for them to ask the salary from teaching. This type-in Mcdougall language is called teachers with a traditional approach (Mcdougall, 2010). This finding also received support from the opinion of Gomes et al. (2017) who said that personal encouragement is the most powerful impetus in the selection of the teaching profession so that it is more resistant to identity crises. A similar sentiment was also conveyed by Sinclair (2008) that intrinsic encouragement has a stronger thrust to realize the ideals of becoming a teacher.

While the second type of teacher, partialist is a teacher who chooses the teaching profession because of the encouragement of family, relatives, friends and so on. This type of teacher's professional identity as a teacher can be eroded, but not one hundred percent. They may switch professions other than teachers but cannot leave teaching. This type-in Mcdougall's term is called teachers in survival mode (Mcdougall, 2010). This is where social transactions occur in him between choosing a new identity or old identity (Cohen, 2008). Because the supporting and inhibiting factors are equally strong, finally they choose the middle way by taking a new profession but not throwing away the old profession as a whole, so in Foster's language, it is called a win-win solution (Foster, 2013).

While the third type, opportunist, is the teacher who chooses the teaching profession because he is forced and there are no other jobs, they are very vulnerable to change the identity of his profession as a teacher to another more promising profession. This type according to Mcdougall is called teachers with futures oriented approaches (Mcdougall, 2010). Most of them explicitly said that they would leave the teaching profession if there were other better jobs. These are what Lawal described as people who are reluctant to admit teaching as a profession. If asked what your job is, he will answer, "I don't have a job sir. I only teach " (Lawal, 2011). Maybe they are ashamed to admit their profession as a teacher, because some people see a low status in the teaching profession so they are reluctant to recognize their profession as a teacher (Lawal, 2011).

The above discussion illustrates that the profession of private teachers in primary schools is vulnerable to change their professional identity. Although many private teachers in primary schools will not leave their professional identities as teachers, because of their personal views, most of them are very vulnerable to leaving their professional identities. Therefore, the authorities, such as school principals and the government, must always strengthen their identities with the right steps. The suggestions given by primary school teachers in this study need to be considered (Ortiz et al. 2018). Because if their voices are heard and used as a material consideration in strengthening the professional identity of teachers, it will reduce the gap between their expectations and the government. This research also has the support from (Ciuciu & Robertson 2019) that the deficient managerial, inadequate administrative allotments, minimal professional autonomy, long working hours, and disrespect of teaching identity and practices inhibited teachers from embodying their professional identities while being a teacher. The effectiveness of the implementation of supervision in primary schools also needs to be improved, because so far the supervision tasks overlap between supervision and evaluation (Mette et al. 2017). The supervisors have been fighting more as evaluators than supervisors, so they have come to evaluate teachers' mistakes rather than directing teachers (Hoffmann et al. 2011).

The teacher is a very important aspect of education because the teacher is a central element in it. Without a teacher's existence education is nothing. So that teachers should have a strong identity in doing their jobs in teaching and other tasks related to teaching and learning. By strong identity, teachers will do their job struggle and full of intentness. Therefore, strengthening the teacher's identity must always be done, both by the school principal, supervisors and other government authorities. Because if not treated, the three types of teachers, whether idealistic, partialist or opportunist, are vulnerable to change pressure so that they can release their teacher's professional identity. Besides, to strengthen the professional identity of private teachers in private primary schools, their voices must be heard, because, with their heavy assignments with little rewards, they can easily let go of their teacher's professional identity. Among the effective ways to strengthen the professional identity of teachers is to solve the problems faced by elementary school teachers through positive programs in schools and support from the government.

### **Recommendations**

Our study presented the teacher's voices on the professional teacher's identity crisis. This research limited to exploring the problem of teachers erose their professional identity and suggestion to empower it. Maybe this research is only the beginning of private teachers' identity crisis research in Indonesia, especially in elementary school scope. For further research better to find out more about many problems such as how private elementary school teachers maintain their professional identity as teachers and what factors affect the strengthening of their professional identity? These two problems are important for further investigation to enrich the findings that have been presented in this study. Further research also can touch more topics from the other subject such as the principle's perspective or supervisor's perspectives. Researchers also can conduct multiple levels of analysis method; quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method to explore more deeply the teacher's identity topic.

### **Limitations of Study**

This research is only limited to the study of the identity crisis in elementary school teachers in Malang. The results of this research may not apply in other cities in Indonesia or in other countries outside Indonesia. This study also did not touch on teachers at higher level schools, such as middle school or high school. therefore, further research on this issue could be carried out on primary school teachers in other cities or at the higher school level, especially junior and senior high schools.

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